

# **THE JACOBS REPORT**

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**For Immediate Release**  
**December 2, 2005**

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## **HOUSE PASSES JACOBS BILL TO STEM COMMUNITY BLIGHT**

### **SB 34 to Governor for Signature**

Legislation that will allow cities to create citizen boards authorized to adopt tax increment financing plans to fund public improvements has passed the House. The legislation was introduced by Sen. Gilda Jacobs (D-Huntington Woods). The Corridor Improvement Authorities (CIAs) would benefit aging communities that do not have the economic tools necessary for business area improvements. The legislation now goes to the House for a committee hearing.

“I’m thrilled that we’re able to provide a bipartisan solution to some of the problems of aging communities,” Jacobs said. “By establishing an official body that has implementation powers, we’re demonstrating collective problem-solving.”

The CIA would be created by the governing body and operate similar to a Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The majority of the board would be comprised of business or property owners. Redevelopment efforts could include street renovation, street lighting, parking lots and sidewalk improvements at no cost to taxpayers. The legislation has received the support of the Michigan Municipal League.

The CIA concept was an outgrowth of conversations Jacobs held with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and Woodward Corridor business owners when she served in the House of Representatives.

“Commercial areas are often gateways to the neighborhoods,” Jacobs said. “This legislation provides a tool for cities that might not otherwise have the means to redevelop entire geographic areas.”

## **DIVISIVE WEEK FOR TEACHER UNIONS**

### **Sparks Fly in both Chambers**

Republican leadership successfully passed separate teacher health care reforms through the House and Senate, falling short on an additional effort in the House to end pensions for new teacher hires.

In the Senate, partisan tensions boiled as a four-bill package was discharged from committee to the floor for a hasty vote.

It was a surprise move as business wound down Thursday. After Senator Wayne Kuipers (R-Holland), Chair of the Senate Committee on Education, huddled with GOP leaders during the final two calendar votes, the Senate Republican majority pulled SB 895, SB 896, SB 897 and SB 898 out of the Education Committee and pushed for floor passage of all four pieces of legislation.

Supporters of the bills contended that they would provide more money for education purposes in the form of health care savings. But opponents, especially the Michigan Education Special Services Association, said the legislation puts teachers at risk because the pools would not be under the same safeguards as other health insurance pools.

The Republicans gained three Democratic votes necessary for passage from the Detroit delegation, which felt comfortable voting for a package that had the support of the Michigan Federation of Teachers (who represent the Detroit teachers) and the AFL-CIO.

Senators Burton Leland (D-Detroit), Martha G. Scott (D-Highland Park) and Buzz Thomas (D-Detroit) voted in favor of all of the bills, including SB 0896, the main piece of the package. On the Republican side, Senators Bruce Patterson (R-Canton), Alan Sanborn (R-Richmond) and Laura Toy (R-Livonia) voted no.

The final vote on SB 0896 ended up being 22-13 with three Democrats being absent.

GOP House leadership also created an element of surprise when it attempted to replace teacher pensions with a 401k style set-up. At the end of the long day, the 401k set-up was out, but a new vesting timeline for retirement health care was in.

The version of HB 4947 that passed creates a graded vesting schedule for health insurance benefits similar to what state and public university employees and lawmakers have. Retirees under the new system would receive 90 percent coverage for their health premiums with 30 years of service; those with less than that but more than 10 years would receive 3 percent for every year served. Retirees would not be allowed to purchase service credits toward their healthcare as well.

HB 4947 ultimately passed 55-52 with only Republicans voting yes. Two Republicans, Reps. Mike Nofs (R-Battle Creek) and Jack Brandenburg (R-Harrison Twp.), voted no on the bill. Rep. Gary Newell (R-Saranac) was not present by the time of the vote.

## **MICHIGAN'S CHILD PROTECTION E-MAIL REGISTRY**

### **First state in nation to guard kids from nasty messages**

This year, Governor Jennifer M. Granholm and Chairman of the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) J. Peter Lark launched a child protection registry enabling parents to guard children from unwanted electronic messages.

“Michigan’s child protection registry is a great way parents can shield their children from inappropriate email,” said Granholm. “I’m proud that Michigan is the first state in the nation to

develop this registry and provide a way for parents and teachers to protect our children from unsuitable emails.”

Michigan’s child protection registry, called the Protect MI Child Registry, allows individuals and schools to register email addresses to which minors have access. In the near future, instant message IDs, mobile phone numbers, fax numbers, pager numbers, and other contact points can also be registered. There is no cost to register.

On July 21, 2004, the Governor signed SB 1025, creating the Michigan Children’s Protection Registry Act (Public Act 241).

Public Act 241 prohibits persons from sending to registered addresses messages about products or services that are legally prohibited for children. Examples include pornography, tobacco, gambling, alcohol, illegal or prescription drugs, firearms, and fireworks. Senders of material are required to remove registered email addresses from their mailing lists within 30 days.

If a registered contact receives a prohibited message, a complaint may be filed with the Michigan Attorney General’s office. A first violation is a misdemeanor; subsequent violations are felonies. Civil penalties may also be sought.

“The Protect MI Child Registry has been designed to be very user-friendly,” said MPSC Chairman J. Peter Lark. “Parents and others who have expressed outrage and frustration at the endless stream of unwanted messages to which their children have access now have a way to reduce those messages.”

The registry was created and will be operated by Unspam Registry Services. For more details on the registry, visit [www.michigan.gov/protectmichild](http://www.michigan.gov/protectmichild).

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All Michigan legislation can be tracked at <http://www.legislature.michigan.gov/>.

State Senator Gilda Jacobs represents the 14<sup>th</sup> Senate District, which includes Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Franklin, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak Township, Southfield, and Southfield Township. She is the Minority Vice Chair of the Families & Human Services Committee and the Economic Development, Small Business & Regulatory Reform Committee. She also serves on the Government Operations and Health Policy Committees.

**Constituents of the 14<sup>th</sup> District may contact Senator Jacobs at [sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov) or toll-free at 1-888-937-4453.**

This newsletter is produced in single-space form in order to save paper and transmission costs.

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